

# SPEECH

OF

HON. JOHN W. ELLIS,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

DEMOCRATIC STATE CONVENTION,

IN RALEIGH,

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## S P E E C H .

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*Mr. President, and Gentlemen of the Convention:*

Your committee has communicated to me the action of the Convention, and I am here to express to you my profound obligations for the high confidence you are pleased to repose in me. A nomination for the office of Governor of the State, by this intelligent body of gentlemen, is a compliment of which any man might justly feel proud; but when it is recollected that you are the representatives of a great political party—expressing their sentiments and speaking their wishes—your action excites in me emotions of gratitude and pleasure to which I can give no adequate expression.

The cordial approval of my administration of the affairs of the State, as expressed by this Convention and by my fellow-citizens in their primary meetings, is esteemed by me as the most valuable reward of office, and, as such, shall be gratefully cherished and remembered.

And, Mr. President, I will take this occasion to acquit myself of a debt of gratitude towards my fellow-citizens of all political parties in every part of the State, by thanking them most sincerely for the generous indulgence received at their hands while in the discharge of my official duties. It is true, my action has at times been misunderstood, and occasionally misrepresented, but of these things I make no complaint, well knowing that they are almost inseparable from that rigid scrutiny to which the conduct of all public servants is rightfully subjected at the bar of public opinion.

I accept, gentlemen, your nomination, and with it the responsibilities and burthens it imposes; and I shall undertake the duties of this position with a deep and solemn conviction that they were never more vitally responsible than in the present juncture of public affairs.

Sixteen years ago, in this Hall, I participated in the first political meeting of my life, and, like this, it was a Democratic Convention; but in every other respect, how widely different the circumstances that now surround us! Then, we had two great national parties, each with an organization extending to every State in the Union; now, we have but one national party,—the other great political organization of the country being so exclusively sectional as not to be able to procure a single vote in one entire section of country embracing an area of 850 thousand square miles. Then, the subjects of controversy between the two parties were merely questions

P 30626 Ramsay

of domestic policy, important it is true, but not vital; now, questions affecting our liberties as a people, and, it may be, our existence as a nation, are under discussion.

Upon these questions the parties are arrayed, and the contest approaches. Upon the one side the Democratic party, buoyant with the recollection of many victories gained in the cause of the country; on the other Freesoilers, black Republicans and Abolitionists, consolidated and combined. These, sir, are the two great contending political forces that divide the country. All others are mere political atoms, that cannot and will not be felt, except so far as they may affect the contest between the two main organizations.

Such, gentlemen, are the parties to the contest. The issue between them should be clearly understood, especially here at the South. I assert, and shall maintain it with the proofs, that this issue is, whether African slavery shall be abolished here in the States, where it now exists? Let us not be deceived upon this point. Men may talk about our rights in the territories, but depend upon it they are not the questions now in issue. The abolition of slavery here at home is the design of our opponents. This is the bond that cements all the anti-slavery elements in one solid column against us.

What says Wm. H. Seward, above all others, the true exponent of the sentiments of the abolition party:—" *The party of freedom seeks complete and universal emancipation. \* \* \* \* It (slavery) can be and must be abolished, and you and I can and must do it. \* \* \* \* It requires only to follow this simple rule of action: To do everywhere and on every occasion what we can, and not to neglect or refuse to do what we can at any time, because at that precise time and on that particular occasion, we cannot do more.*" Everywherc, and upon all occasions, in power and out of power, this man and his party seek, in his own language, "*complete and universal emancipation.*" Can proof be clearer or evidence more convincing?

Of the same tenor is the notorious Rochester speech of this man, delivered ten years after the sentiment quoted: "*It is an irrepressible conflict between opposing and enduring forces; and it means that the United States must and will, sooner or later, become either entirely a slaveholding nation, or entirely a free labor nation.*" Here, sir, is the bold announcement that a state of hostilities exists between the North and the South, which shall not cease until the one party or the other be conquered, and trodden under the feet of the victor. It is a declaration of war against the South by this man and his partizans. Give them power and it will be used in the prosecution of that war. Your Army, Navy, and a hundred million of revenue annually, and as much more as they may choose to extort from the people, will all be directed against this devoted people.

But is it perfectly certain that Seward speaks the sentiments of his party?

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The proof upon this point too, is clear and conclusive. In a book of infamous notoriety, which has received the full and complete approval of the black Republican party, and is now circulated by them as a campaign document, is this sentiment, among others, equally treasonable: "*Our purpose is as firmly fixed as the eternal pillars of Heaven. We have determined to abolish slavery, and so help us God abolish it we will.*"

A Senator of the Empire State of the Union, under his own hand, endorses this book, after a careful perusal; a Governor of the same State contributes \$100 towards its circulation here among the best customers of his people. This shame, brought upon the Empire State by unworthy sons and faithless public officers, is destined, I trust, to be gloriously wiped out by the Democracy in the coming contest, when the land of Silas Wright will once more stand proudly forth among the States of the Union, without a spot or a stain upon her escutcheon.

Is further proof wanted of the designs of these men? Does the tragedy of Harper's Ferry teach us nothing? when traitors and assassins found men to lament their failure and mourn their discomfiture; when the graves of executed felons drew forth copious tears, as though one distinguished for patriotic service to the country had fallen!

But the apologists of this man Seward and his followers, boast that we have Constitutional guaranties that will protect our property, even though he or one of his associates be elected President and the Abolitionists placed in power. What, the Constitution stand in the way of the Abolitionists! What says this same Mr. Seward on that point? Hear his admonitions to some of his more innocent followers, who really thought, in the simplicity of their hearts, that the Constitution of the United States did possess some binding force: "*Correct your own error that slavery has any Constitutional guaranty which may not be released and ought not to be relinquished.*" Think you that the Constitution would bind the conscience of a man entertaining such sentiments? Does not all the world know, too, that one of the cardinal articles of the Abolition creed is, that there is a law higher than the Constitution, which claims their first allegiance? Have not more than a dozen States, where these men now predominate, adopted laws nullifying an important clause of the Constitution? Can we hope that men will respect our rights of property, who incite, aid and abet the murderers of our citizens? Expect assassins to keep faith or traitors to observe oaths? Let us not be deceived, my fellow-citizens, in a matter so nearly affecting our personal security and most sacred rights.

But how, it is asked, will these men carry out their Abolition designs if placed in power? Let their own great leader answer: "*By doing everywhere, and on every occasion, what we can.*" Fraud and force would be their favorite means. Secret encouragement and open aid to assassins like John Brown, with an assurance of protection in case of failure,—just such protection, except on a larger scale, as the black Republican Governor of

Iowa gave to one of the Harper's Ferry conspirators. What has been done may be done again. Money and arms have already been plentifully contributed, as we know, to this purpose. Men in high places aided the treasonable enterprises of John Brown. Senator Wilson, of Massachusetts, admits—not, however, until the fact was proved by other testimony—that he knew that John Brown entertained lawless and treasonable designs against the Southern States, and though disapproving, yet he concealed it from the country. This, gentlemen, is the case of a man who comes to you and tells you he intends to murder your neighbor at the hour of midnight, when asleep in his bed, and to despoil him of his property. Could you justify yourselves before your own consciences and your God by simply telling the assassin it is wrong, and failing to warn your neighbor of the impending danger? How much more innocent is the conduct of such a man than that of the murderer himself? Yet such is the conduct of Senator Wilson.

Senator Seward was an accessory before the fact to the transaction, and as such, could be convicted, upon the testimony of his accomplice, before any fair-minded and honest jury in Christendom. Just such testimony has sent many a man to the gallows here in North-Carolina. Forbes acquainted him with the "whole matter in all its bearings," as he says; yet he concealed it. A Senator of the United States, sworn to support the Constitution of his country, harbors in the secret recesses of his bosom, a plot of treason against that country and of murder against its citizens! Yet, this is the man whom the black Republicans would make President. With his hands reeking in the blood of murdered citizens, and the dark stains of perjury thick upon him, they would place him in the Chair of Washington, and clothe him with the mantle of the immortal Father of his Country.

This shame, my fellow-citizens, must never come upon the country. No, never, never. This bold, bad man, with his partizans, must be beaten down and crushed out, and the Democratic party can and must do it. Keeping our eyes steadily fixed upon the true issue involved—whether slavery is to be abolished here in the South,—and animated by a full sense of the danger that threatens the country, we will go into the battle under the flag of the Constitution and the Union—a flag that has never yet sustained dishonor or defeat at the hands of any foe—and depend upon it our victory will be as complete and as brilliant as our cause is just and righteous.

But in this vital struggle, we, strangely enough, meet with obstacles here at home. Our opponents here affect to doubt the soundness of Northern Democrats, our allies, on the slavery question. I should be most reluctant to believe this charge to be true; for then, indeed, would the last hope of this country have deserted her. No, sir, it is not true. If there are any men who deserve praise above others for remaining faithful to the Constitution of the country, they are the noble Democracy of the Northern States.

With no pecuniary interest involved,—with no rights of property at stake,—without even the greetings of popular applause to reward them,—surrounded by adversaries on all sides, they manfully maintain the unequal contest; against detraction and abuse—against fanaticism in all its fierce and fearful forms, they bravely fight the battle of the Constitution and the Union. We, the Democrats of North-Carolina, greet them this day, before the world, as worthy allies in a great cause.

Allow me, Mr. President, to call your attention to a practical illustration of the difference between a Northern Democrat and a black Republican. Gov. Packer, of Pennsylvania, surrendered one of the Harper's Ferry traitors, promptly, upon the demand of the Governor of Virginia. He is a Democrat. Gov. Kirkwood, of Iowa, refused to surrender, upon demand, one of the same conspirators, but gave him shelter and protection. He is a black Republican. The one obeyed his oath of office as an honest man, the other perjured himself before his country and his God. This, then, is the wide difference between a Northern Democrat and an abolitionist. And he who professes not to see it, in the face of evidence so plain, should not complain, if he himself incurs the suspicion of an obtuseness of vision upon this slavery question.

Another prediction of our opponents here is, that we will differ and divide in the Charleston convention, and thus be shorn of our power to defeat the abolitionists; the last thing in the world we intend to do. Differ, we often do, but divide never. The word divide is not to be found in all the great dictionary of the Democratic language. It only occurs here and there in some fugitive productions that have no rank among the standard works of our political literature. Our opponents seem utterly unable to comprehend the nature of our political organization; we are a party based upon principle, and have no power to divide.

And, gentlemen of the Opposition, let me say to you here, now, that those of you who build your hopes of preferment upon expected divisions in the Democratic party, have a long and lonely road to travel before reaching your destination.

Why divide? Oh! it is said we differ about certain questions out in the territories. True it is we differ as to the proper construction of a law of Congress. And we have agreed in that law itself to submit that question of difference to the determination of the Supreme Court; a tribunal erected by the Constitution expressly to perform such duties. No true Democrat fears to submit any mere legal question, as this is, to the decision of the Supreme Court, and no true Democrat can refuse to enforce its decisions when made; and that, too, with all the powers of the government, whenever their exercise may become necessary to this end. He who would resist or evade such decisions is not only a bad Democrat, but a dangerous citizen. No, gentlemen, there will be no division at Charleston.

The peace of the country requires the black Republican party to be overthrown, and there is no political organization that can do it but the



Democratic party. The country, then, demands the united services of all Democrats, and depend upon it, as ever heretofore it will have them. Wherever, throughout our broad domain, waves the flag of the Republic, there will be seen Democrats shoulder to shoulder, resisting in solid column the reckless assailants who would tear down and desecrate this emblem of our national liberties.

Yet, in view of the plain facts of our situation, an effort is being made to organize another political power, which effort, it must be confessed, borders rather on the ludicrous, considering the very serious nature of the subject. A few respectable gentlemen, who in times past, held high offices in the government; politicians of a former generation, nearly all of whom long years since having selected an involuntary retirement into the "bosoms of their families," where only, it is said, true contentment is to be found, assemble in the City of Washington, and gravely undertake to set up and knock down political organizations just as boys toss about their jack straws.

It may be that these gentlemen were not animated by a desire for office, yet, when we look at their acts, we can scarcely resist the suspicion that they at least still have pleasant recollections of the times when the robes of high office encircled them. Doubtless when assembled in conclave in the Federal City—the theatre of their former grandeur—and looking each other in the face, they thought of the past and all its glories,—the halcyon days that were no more, and indulged in the reveries of the poet :

"Sweet memory, wafted by thy gentle gale,  
Oft up the stream of time I turn my sail  
To view the fairy haunts of long lost hours,  
Blest with far greener shades, far fresher flowers."

But, it is said, actions speak louder than words;—let them speak in this case. These venerable gentlemen and ancient politicians, in a lengthy address of much sound and little substance, bearing the charmed date of the 22d February—of course they meant no appeal to popular prejudices—seriously propose to their followers throughout the country to send up to their national Convention two nominees for the Presidency from each State. Great Heavens! a party with sixty-six candidates for the Presidency! and that, too, a young party! aye, a small select party!—and yet these are the men who modestly charge the Democrats with a love of office! Now, gentlemen, mark the sequence of events! No sooner had this association adjourned than its members fly off into the States with the lightning speed of the railway and bravely commence the work of what?—of nominating each other for the Presidency! Already they have conferred this honor upon numbers of their body, and the others are doubtless anxiously awaiting their turn. It seems to be a sort of Mutual Admiration Society, entertaining rather a better opinion of themselves than of other men. They say that they are anxious to save the country,—aye, so exceedingly anxious



that they are unwilling to trust any one else to be its saviour, except one of their own number; upon the principle, I suppose, that when a man wants a thing well done he must do it himself.

It is a sort of political lottery that has no parallel in all the bogus lotteries that infest the land. Even the great gift lottery itself, of which we have heard so much, pales before the brilliancy of this new scheme. I should be glad to find the mathematician, so proficient in his science as to calculate the chances of one of these State nominees for the Presidency. In the first place, the "Wheel of Fortune" that turns out the nominee contains sixty-five blanks and one prize. Sixty-five chances against one for the nomination. And then the "Wheel of Fortune" that turns out the President contains, as nearly as I can estimate in figures, about sixty-five millions of blanks and no prize at all. This, sir, is the grand Presidential juggle of the "United, Consolidated, Constitutional, National, Union party!" It presents one merit, at least, the tickets are cheap;—the State nominations cost but little. Call you this a party that is to meet and overwhelm the hosts of black Republicanism?—this little junta of antiquated politicians. No, sir, it is not a party, nor even the fraction of a party; it is a joint stock company of President seekers, nothing more, nothing less. This very proposition is an insult to the American people. They propose to re-enact the miserable farce of 1856, when Mr. Fillmore was run as a third man, and got just one small State in the Union, and that by brow-beating and skull-breaking, and he the strongest man among them.

But suppose they get one State out of the thirty-three, an event scarcely within the range of possibilities,—does not every one know it will be taking just that much from the strength of the opponents of the abolitionists? This is a party that can certainly do no good, and may do some harm. The people of this country should beware of a party that possesses only the power of doing harm.

In conjunction and unison with the operations of the Joint Stock Company at Washington, were the transactions of the late Opposition Convention in this State. The *Opposition* Convention it is called, and surely it richly merits the name. It presents a collection of opposites, contrarities, antagonisms and contradictions, not to be found elsewhere, in all the uncertain annals of politics and politicians. They resolve in favor of a system of *ad valorem* taxation, and select a gentleman to advocate the measure before the people, who, but a few months since, in his solemn and sworn capacity as a legislator, recorded the convictions of his judgment against it. They propose a Convention to alter the organic law, and nominate a candidate to go before the people and say that it is *right*, who, but a few short months since, said, under oath, that it is *wrong*. They place Mr. Pool, of 1860, in direct opposition and hostility to Mr. Pool, of 1859. They resolve warmly in favor of works of internal improvement, and to prove their sincerity to the Western people, select a gentleman to advocate them before the people, whose first political success was a triumph over a Dem-

ocrat because he had supported and given existence and life to these very measures,—a gentleman who has voted against every Railroad, in some form, now in course of construction, and who never voted for, talked for, or worked for, any Railroad that ever has been built in North-Carolina, or, in my opinion, that ever will be built.

Conduct so extraordinary as this, may seem inexplicable at the first glance; but it has its explanation, and I feel bound, in justice to my Opposition friends, who are now absent, to give it. You will recollect that they passed a similar resolution in 1854, in favor of Railroads, and the distinguished General who led their forces in that contest, promised the people beyond the Blue Ridge that he would “*bore a hole*” through that mountain, should it cost “*ten millions of dollars*.” Now, it so happened, “*in the fullness of time*,” that that redoubtable General was placed in a situation to “bore” that long-promised “hole.” The augur was placed in his hands, and he was requested to “bore,” according to contract, but bore he would not—no, not one inch. From that day to this, those shrewd mountaineers have somewhat distrusted platforms and politicians upon this subject. And now, in order to reassure them, to satisfy them fully and entirely that they are in earnest, and mean to carry out, without fail and without doubt, their promises to construct Railroads, our opponents have selected a gentleman to execute these works whose whole life has been at war with them, and whose whole political course has been one of unmitigated and unbending opposition to them. But, despair not, ye long-suffering men beyond the mountains! This paradox is explained upon the principle that the Opposition party of North-Carolina, like dreams, “go by contraries.”

In the fourth resolution of the series adopted by this Convention, they magnanimously admit that the adopted citizen is entitled to protection, like the native; and they take the poor foreigner into their especial care and keeping, and, strangely enough, select as his guardian and protector a third degree Know Nothing. Verily, gentlemen, this is, as the lawyers would say, “*quasi agnum committere lupo, ad devorandum*.”

Really, Mr. President, the Opposition seem to be more opposed to the political acts of their own candidate than to those of the Democrats. It is certain that upon two of the four planks in their platform referred to, the Democrats have always stood; and it is equally certain, that upon neither one of them has their own candidate ever stood. No, not for one solitary moment of his whole life up to the time of the meeting of their convention.

Again: in their most important resolution our opponents term themselves, with a self-satisfied air of superior excellence, the “*Conservative*” party; and in the self same moment lay hands upon the very pillars of our Constitution, and would shake that venerated fabric to its basis. They charge the Democrats with having, to use their own language, “*annulled long established compromises between the conflicting interests of different sections, broken down the great landmarks of policy erected by our fathers*,”

&c. And, in the face of this broad charge, without a blush and without shame, they themselves propose to 'annul' a most solemn compromise here at home, and to 'break down' the "landmarks of policy erected by *our* fathers," "to reconcile conflicting interests of different sections," and to bring peace and contentment to our people. They propose to abrogate a solemn covenant between the East and the West, made and entered into by the most illustrious names that adorn our history on the part and in behalf of the whole people of North-Carolina, and ratified and confirmed by that people. To this covenant Macon, Gaston, Toomer, Fisher, Owen, Spaight, Wilson and Meares, among the dead, and Branch, Morehead, Swain, Rayner, Barringer, Edwards, Outlaw, Biggs, Gaither, Graves and others, of the living, were the high contracting parties.

The author and advocate of this proposition to violate a solemn covenant, (Mr. Badger) says:—"I would have opposed it before the compromise of the amended Constitution of 1835 had been violated by the Democratic party, in passing the bill for free suffrage in the Senate of the State. We were all bound by that compromise; but when violated on the one part it became invalid on the other," &c. So, the gentleman seems to have thought his position required an explanation. Most certainly it did, and I am nothing loath to say, a much better one than he has given. Without admitting his facts, the conclusion to which he arrived is neither good law nor sound morals. The violation of one stipulation in a covenant is not an abrogation of all others. If a man bind himself in a bond to perform a certain labor, and to pay, also, a sum of money, his failure to perform the labor is no release of his obligation to pay the money. If the free suffrage Act was a wrong, which I do not admit, it is no justification for the perpetration of another wrong. Sir, from the day that the Creator himself made a covenant with Moses and Israel, in the wilderness of Sinai, covenants have been most sacredly revered by all Christian people; and surely none can be of a more solemn character, and more binding force, than one made among the members of a great political community, to prevent internal discord and to secure domestic peace.

I view this compromise in our Constitution from a stand point higher than any mere party ground. The owners of slave property have the same right to claim that it be observed as to ask that those in the Constitution of the United States in their favor, be not broken. The same reasoning sustains both. If the one falls, upon what ground shall we uphold the other? By my voice, at least, it shall not fall. Come what will, I shall stand by it; and if, as predicted by my opponents, I go down in the contest, I will, at all events, have the consolation of knowing that I fall in the defence of the Constitution of my country,—that Temple of Liberty under whose protecting arches three generations of contented and happy men have lived, and prospered, and enjoyed a civil liberty without a parallel in the annals of free peoples. A more honorable political grave I could not expect, and certainly do not desire.



But, sir, let me return to the contradictions of our opponents, as the catalogue is not yet exhausted. They highly commend, and justly too, their members in Congress for voting for a Democrat to beat a black Republican, yet they refuse to do the same thing themselves, out of Congress. They say to their members, you did right to vote for a Democrat to defeat an Abolitionist; it was a noble, self-sacrificing act, an offering of patriotism on the altar of country, induced by a love of the Constitution and the Union, but for the life of us we can't do the same thing ourselves. We can't march up to that point of patriotic sacrifice for the country, although we do "march to the music of the Union."

The proposition is a plain one, and admits of no alternative. If it was important to defeat a black Republican Speaker, it is still more important to defeat a black Republican President. If the Opposition members of Congress did right, then the Opposition members of this Convention did wrong—a conclusion from which there is no escape. I am reminded, Mr. President, by this resolution of thanks, that our Opposition Convention adjourned without finishing up their business. Yes, sir, carefully as was their platform gotten up, and lengthy as is their series of resolves, there occurs in their proceedings an important omission to which I will advert. After adopting the resolution of thanks to their members of Congress, it certainly became their duty and hence a part of their business to pass also a resolution of thanks to the Hon. John Kerr, Daniel M. Barringer, James W. Osborne and a host of other good and true Whigs, who from a sense of public duty voted for Mr. Buchanan to defeat a black Republican for President. This, sir, is a part of the unfinished business of the Grand Council which ought certainly to be performed, and that speedily by the Subordinate Lodges throughout the State.

Perhaps, Mr. President, the most melancholy spectacle, in all the proceeding of our opponents, is that exhibited in the persons of two grave and venerable Ex-Senators coming forward to illustrate the consistency of long lives spent in the advocacy of specific taxes, and those, too, of a protective character, by speaking for and voting for a rigid, unbending and uniform rule of *ad valorem*—a tax upon all things of one uniform per centage on the value. Of course they were animated by no desire for office,—no not they, the Democrats only are the office seekers,—they were impelled to this step, doubtless, merely by a desire to unburthen the conscience of the conviction of a great political error, and to set right the younger generation of men, whom, all their life long, they had led wrong,—a sort of death-bed repentance, as it were.

One of these gentlemen, formerly an unsuccessful candidate for the Vice Presidency and now seeking the honors of martyrdom in the Presidential field, is himself the father of that principle of discriminating against luxuries in favor of articles of necessity that pervades our entire revenue system. This offspring was born of his message of 1846, in which he asked the Legislature to augment the revenue, by taxing "pleasure car-



riages, gold watches," and "other articles of *luxury*." Now he comes forward to destroy this work of his own creation.

He says now, that the land of the hard working man, upon which he makes a subsistence for his family, the growing citizens of the State, should be taxed just as high as the gold and silver plate that decorates the abodes of the luxurious; that the plough horse that tills the crop of the man who eats his bread "in the sweat of his face," shall be taxed as much as the racer of the man of pleasure; that the pleasure carriage and the road wagon; the billiard table and the threshing machine; the pack of gambler's cards and the family bible; the spirits that make drunk the inebriate and the medicine administered to the sick, shall be taxed alike under one equal horizontal and unbending rule of *ad valorem*. Sir, he stands not only in opposition to his own former actions, but in opposition to the lessons taught mankind by all nations in the past history of the world. For this assertion I plant myself upon the undoubted truths of all history. There never was, never will be, and never can be, a people governed by such a system of taxation as these two distinguished ex-Senators now propose for us here in North-Carolina. This, sir, is the fruit of a most sudden conversion from extreme error in the opposite direction, not an unfrequent result attending over-sudden conversions in one's political or religious faith. It is an awkward attempt at imitating the *ad valorem* taxation as advocated by the Democratic party.

The Tariff Act of 1846, will show the striking difference between Democratic and Opposition *ad valorem* taxation. That act classifies all imports, taxing each class *ad valorem*, but discriminating as between the classes, and contains a free list upon which there is no tax. For instance, brandies, spirits, &c., in class No. 1, are taxed one hundred per cent. on their value, while plaster paris and other fertilizers, &c., in class 8, are taxed but five per cent. on the value; and tea and coffee, &c., in class No. 9, are not taxed at all. Such is the nature of a Democratic *ad valorem* tax, adjusted with a due regard to the varied interests of the people. But our opponents in their sudden conversion to the *ad valorem* principle, rush into extremes and would send the tax-gatherer into every house, with inquisitorial powers, exacting with a relentless hand, a tax upon every species of property great and small; every thing that we eat, drink and wear, from the time we come into the world until we go out of it, from the cradle to the grave,—making no discrimination between necessities and luxuries—those things that are essential to the support of life and such as lead to vice and idleness.

Such, sir, is this *ad valorem* platform of our opponents, erected by Senatorial wisdom, and upon which they have planted themselves in fancied security. But they will desert it. Before the summer's sun stands erect in the heavens every mother's son of them will scamper from it as rats flee a burning barn.

But, gentlemen, the crowning contradiction exhibited by this Convention, is yet to be named. Though nine tenths, at least, of its members were Americans, they nominate as their first choice for the Presidency a gentleman who always carefully disavowed any connection with the Order. His public communications of a year or two past, invariably contained an unostentatious little expression, somewhat parenthetically thrown in, as if merely to adorn a sentence—"Though not a member of the Order." Modest as this expression appeared at the time, it was big with meaning, and like seed sown upon good ground was expected some day to "bring forth fruit." To the Americans it said, "you go forward and if you get your fingers burnt in this political experiment, then, I am not a member of the Order; but, if you succeed, I am with you, because of the old Whig bond of sympathy between us." And to the leaders of the American party it said, "heads I win, tails you lose," and so indeed, it has come to pass. Where were these leaders when this nomination was made? And above all, he the most gallant and the most eloquent, whose clarion voice led their columns to the charge, rallied them in the repulse, and when defeat came cheered their drooping spirits in their disastrous retreat, and when exposed to the cold and pitiless storms of adversity—and cold and pitiless they were indeed—still manfully proclaimed to the world, "I am a member of the Order." All superseded for one who always said, and now, doubtless greatly rejoices, that he never was a member of the Order. Alas, gentlemen, what a sad forgetfulness of their own great watchword, "put none but Americans on guard to night!"

Such, sir, are some of the inconsistencies and contradictions of the late Opposition Convention. But in one particular they were consistent with all their former conduct; and as consistency is said to be a jewel, it is but right and proper that this their jewel should be allowed to shine forth in its own resplendent brilliancy—a sort of lone star in their political firmament. In their proceedings and speeches they appropriate the choicest epithets of abuse that our language affords to the Democratic party; but not one harsh saying have they for the black Republicans. They charge the Democrats with the most heinous crimes and misdemeanors, yet not even a "soft impeachment" of the Abolitionists is to be heard from them; and in this, sir, at least, they are consistent with themselves.

Among their charges against the Democrats, is one of grave import. They charge that we have caused the present agitation throughout the country, and brought discord among a quiet and contented people, by the repeal of the Missouri Compromise line. When the orators of the Convention hurled this blow at the Democracy, there was a gentleman of their own number, who, doubtless, with no little trepidation dodged, lest it might fall upon his own head. A very prominent ex-Senator among them, spoke for and voted for the repeal of this lamented Missouri line. A fact beyond all controversy, however, illy it may comport with that other fact that the same gentleman penned that charge in their bill of indictment, that the

Democrats had "*annulled long established compromises between conflicting interests,*" &c.

Sir, there is a plain fact to which the attention of the country should be called. Our opponents say, the Democratic party must be put down. So says Wm. H. Seward. In his Rochester speech, he says: "*The Democratic party must be permanently dislodged from the government. The reason is, that the Democratic party is inextricably committed to the designs of the slaveholders.*"

It matters nothing as to the motives of men who are working to accomplish the same end. And if this end be accomplished; if the Democratic party does go down, does not the whole world know that upon its ruins will be established the abolition party?

Such, Mr. President, is this party of opposites. But, their opposition will prove unavailing. The minds of the people cannot be diverted from the true issue before the country. The safety of our property, and the repose of the republic, depend upon the result. Greater incentives to united and harmonious action could not be presented to the minds of freemen. They will produce their results. They will arouse that love of country inherent in the American heart, and which is never found wanting when that country is endangered. Personal rivalries and party differences will alike disappear, as the fight thickens and the danger approaches. The arts of the politician will then lose their charm, and the people—Opposition and Democratic—will stand together in serried ranks under the banner of the Constitution and the Union. Be of good cheer, my fellow-citizens, the battle is for the country and not for party; and as the object for which we fight is great, our victory will be glorious.

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[*Extract from the Debates of the Convention of 1835.—Page 82.*]

"Mr. Swain thought the views of the gentleman from Burke entirely erroneous; he knew they were not the views of the Western members of the Legislature, who last winter effected a compromise of the Convention. One leading principle was to provide against unequal taxation. What he understood by equalizing the tax between black and white polls was not to disturb the periods as now fixed, between which the poll shall be subject to taxation; but to say that if a white poll (male between 21 and 45) pays 20 cents tax, a black poll (male or female between 12 and 50) shall pay no more nor less than that sum. As representation in the Senate is to be based upon taxation, the West would diminish her representation in that body by making the tax larger on the black than the white poll—and the representation from the East would be increased in the same ratio, their slave population being proportionally greater.

After some further remarks Mr. Gaither withdrew his amendment, the Committee rose, reported progress, and the Convention adjourned."



